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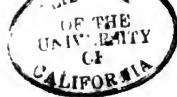
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About Japan

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# JAPAN SOCIETY

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## December, 1920, News Bulletin

### Interesting Facts About the Japanese Birth and Death

An average of 1,750,000 souls were born annually in Japan proper during the past decade, which means 33.0 for every 1,000 population. The rate is much lower among Western nations—for instance, states the "East and West News," in Germany it was 29.5; in France 19.5; in England 24.9, and in America 21.0 during five pre-war years. The death rate is also higher in Japan than in most of the Occidental countries. During a similar period the average number of deaths annually in Japan reached a million, which is 20.6 per 1,000 population, while in Germany the rate was 16.5; France 18.6; England 14.9, and America 14.1 during the years 1910-15. The Japanese census authorities computed that in the Orient three souls are born and two die every second; 10% of the total deaths being due to tuberculosis; 11% to intestinal diseases and 8.5% to pneumonia. Japan is a great country for suicide, 12,000, or 1.2%, of the total deaths being due to this cause. In America 10.3% of the total deaths occur from tuberculosis; 10.5% from pneumonia, 10.8% from heart disease and 0.9% from suicide.

### Marriage and Divorce

In 1916 the marriage rate per 10,000 population in Japan was 81.4, while in America it was 105; in England 76; Germany 78 and France 77. But what about divorce? During the transitional period between 1880 and 1900 there was one divorce for every three marriages in Japan. Since the civil law has been revised the average number has diminished to 135.0 per 1,000 marriages. The United States alone approaches Japan with 107 divorces per 1,000 marriages. Roughly, there is one divorce for every seven marriages in Japan, one for every ten in the United States, and one for every 10,000 in England. The divorces granted to Nippon husbands are eight times as many as those granted to wives, but in America the divorces granted to wives are double those granted to husbands. Desertion, cruelty and unfaithfulness are the greatest causes of divorce in America while in Japan they are domestic complications, cruelty and lack of harmony in interests.

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## Street Peddlers of Japan

So numerous and varied are the street peddlers and street hawkers of Tokyo that the busy Japanese housewife need not go beyond her doorstep to find food, clothing, comforts and amusements for her family. She need do no more cooking than the preparation of the daily rice and yet have a varied and nutritious menu placed upon the family table three times a day.

### A Frequent Peddler

Probably first among the daily sellers of food used by every household in Japan, says the Japan Advertiser, is the tofu man, who makes his regular rounds three times a day. He carries his wares in a flat wooden tub swung from either end of a carrying-pole, balanced on his shoulder, and loudly attracts the attention of his customers by a call characteristic of what he has to sell. Tofu is bean curd and when once prepared will keep but 24 hours. Since it is eaten at breakfast, as well as at the other two meals, it follows that the tofu manufacturer's day begins about 2 o'clock in the morning. He carries two kinds of curds, *kinu-koshi*, which is strained through silk and is soft and tender; and *momen*, which is strained through cotton cloth and is more coarse and tough. The raw curd is used in soup and various other dishes. Prepared in other ways, it forms a dish by itself; it may be fried in oil or mixed with vegetables and fried in a flat round cake. The price for this commodity is uniform throughout the town, any change being reported to the police authorities.

### Fifty Kinds of Preserves

Two other very interesting vendors are the *nimame-ya* and the *konbu* man. The former pulls a little cart fitted with a number of tiny drawers containing from 40 to 50 different kinds of preserves and pickles which are ready to be put upon the table. But the article which gives the name to this vendor is a variety of freshly cooked beans or peas, which are also ready to be eaten and sell for 10 sen (5 cents) a handful. This peddler, however, does not operate on his own capital, as does the *tofu* man, but is employed by a pickle shop.

On the other hand, the *konbu* man carries all his stock in trade with him and walks the streets all day, from one end of town to the other. His wares are packed in wooden boxes, piled one on top of the other and swung from the ends of a shoulder pole. *Konbu* is the name of a food that is made from seaweed and is used more as a seasoning than as a dish by itself.

### A Sign of Early Morning

*Natto*, another bean product, is used in the morning *miso* soup by that part of the nation which is north of Tokyo. It is sold usually by poor women who make a few sen during the early morning hours before

the real work of the day begins. The musical cry of the vendors of this food is one of the first indications in a Japanese town that another day has dawned. It is carried in a small bundle in the hand of the seller.

From early morning until night many other peddlers traverse the streets of Tokyo, each in a unique way trying to persuade the housewife to buy of his wares. There is no doubt that the fish sold are strictly fresh, for the vendor of this food carries a tub filled with water and sells his goods alive.

### A Popular Vendor

As in America and other countries, street hawkers go from door to door soliciting their services in the various useful trades. But the street peddler that appeals to the grown ups as well as to children is the ice-cream man. Carts with an array of glass cups, spoons and a brass freezer are met from one end of town to the other during the summer. A "dish" of ice-cream from one of these carts costs five sen, (2½c).

A popular summer drink is *amazake*, or sweet sake. It is carried about the streets on the end of a tenbin-bo or pole in a red box. A drink of this costs only two sen—and a dash of ginger is added for nothing.

And so we have numerous other interesting peddlers who walk the streets of Tokyo at various intervals during the day, each one calling out his wares in a noisy fashion and all adding to the clamor of a busy town.

## Japan to Have a Tax on Enjoyment

Cheer up! We are not the only people who have taxes levied upon our various kinds of amusements for, according to the *Chugai*, a Japanese vernacular paper, a *yukyu-zei* or enjoyment tax will be raised by the Social Bureau of the Municipality of Tokyo to the extent of yen 1,700,000 in the fiscal year beginning October 1 next. The city council has already agreed upon the enforcement of the new tax and is bringing the measure before the Government through the prefectural authorities.

The duty is to be levied upon any expenditures exceeding three yen (\$1.50) for any kind of amusement. The rate is to be 10% and is to be paid by the proprietor. But, no doubt, the general public will know the incidence of the tax!

## Not a Telephone Nickel

"Do not use new five sen nickel" is the notice posted at each public telephone booth throughout Japan. The new coin recently issued by the Government is lighter than the old nickel, and though it will go into the slot it will not give a connection with central; so the telephone bureau has given the public warning not to waste its money.

The bureau is also investigating, with the view of adopting, a better method for payment at public telephone booths, for with the present system every time the Government is inclined to change the size of the five sen piece the telephones have to be reconstructed.

## Japan Has World's First Woman Consul

Joint honor is shared by Japan and Armenia, for Mrs. Diana Apageg Apar has been appointed Honorary Consul for Armenia at Yokohama and will represent the new Republic of the Near East in the Empire of Japan, says the *Japan Advertiser*.

Mrs. Apar, who is a widow and past middle age, has always been a tireless worker in behalf of the interests of her fellow countrymen. She conducts a general merchandise business in the city in which she is now residing as Consul.

## Peace Society Formed

Representatives of all the political parties in Japan have formed an international peace association with the hope of arriving at a better understanding with the United States, comes a report from Tokyo to the *Journal of Commerce*.

The enlistment is sought of religious and cultural leaders who will visit the United States. It is also planned to issue publications tending toward a betterment of conditions between the two countries.

## Japan to Aid Chinese Students

The Japanese Government has decided that in the future it will pay the expenses of Chinese students who are pursuing their courses in the various high and technical schools of Japan, states the "*Far Eastern Review*". Hitherto it has been the policy of the Chinese government to defray the expenses from the state treasury, but recently the Japanese officials refused to accept any money for the education of the young Chinese. At the last session of the Diet it was decided to set aside a special fund to be devoted to this purpose and a claim for yen 73,483 (\$36,746.50) has already been allowed. There are now about 400 Chinese students matriculating at the high and polytechnic schools in Japan.

## Kobe to Have a New Library

A new library building, which Kobe has felt the need of for some time, has been assured through the contributions of yen 200,000 (\$100,000) by a number of leading citizens and will be erected in Okurayama Park, states the *Japan Advertiser*. It will be a two-story building of reinforced concrete, the upper floor of which will be used for reading rooms and the ground floor for offices.

A storehouse of concrete five stories high will be constructed near the new building to contain the book stacks of the institution. The library will probably be ready for use by next September.

## Japanese Gardens

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of the Japanese people is their love and appreciation of the beauties of nature. It is this understanding of nature in all its moods that has raised the craft of landscape gardening to an art in Japan.

The original rules and regulations for reproducing in miniature some well-loved or famous scene, says the *Japan Advertiser*, was introduced into Japan by Chinese priests as early as the eighth century. It was first fostered and elaborated by Buddhist priests and monks and later by famous masters of the celebrated tea-ceremony. Great lords and renowned warriors spent vast sums in creating gardens where each stone and tree was selected with infinite care. So universal was the appeal of the garden that even the humblest dwelling reserved a small plot wherein was suggested a bit of mountain or sea coast.

### Not Like Occidental Gardens

The Japanese do not strive for a profusion of flowers nor orderly borders. Their first idea in laying out a garden is to make it characteristic of the owner, so that the busy man in his leisure hours shall find there peace and rest from the hustling world without; and the priest and old age, a quiet retreat wherein are represented scenes of cheerful contentment.

More extensive gardens frequently depict scenes from different parts of the country, but no matter how many elements enter in, the arrangement of artificial hills, trees, ponds, shrubs and winding pathways is such that to one strolling in the garden, one scene, mood or idea is presented at a time.

Most gardens of any size have one or more rustic pavilions, so placed as to command a favorite view, such as a moon-rise over a hill or between trees. A pond, large or small, real or artificial, is an almost indispensable part of a garden and is so placed to fit into the picture that it always appears to be larger than it is. Carp, gold-fish and turtles are the necessary inhabitants of the pond and feeding the fish is one of the pleasures accorded the visitor.

### A Bridge is Essential

No pond is quite complete without some sort of a bridge stretched across a part of it. These may be arching structures of carefully selected masonry, or of a less pretentious character. But in either case, much care and thought is given to the selection of material and design. Bridges are thrown over miniature streams as well as ponds and each bridge in a garden has its own name.

There are bridges, however, that are not built over a pond or stream, for there is a certain kind of garden which is called "kare sensui", or dried-up scenery. Here sand and gravel is used instead of water and the effect is curiously beautiful. A well-kept stream of selected pebbles and rounded stones winds its way between verdant

banks, is crossed by quaint bridges, forded on stepping stones, and empties itself into a dry lake of the same kind of pebbles.

When gardens consist chiefly of rocks, great skill must be shown in the resetting and selection of these jewels of nature—color, shape, size and kind entering into the choice of these rocks “which have been formed by the fingers of time.”

### **Stone Lantern a Garden's Pride**

If one object can be said to have most care and thought put into its preparation, it is the stone lantern. Perhaps this is because it is more durable than the rest of the garden, or perhaps it is because originally the lanterns were intended for offering light to various deities. They have been an adjunct of a Japanese garden from the time of the middle ages.

Stone well curbs are also frequently introduced into gardens for purely scenic reasons. Moss and lichen adhering to the stone work, whether on bridge, lantern or basin, is not only a mark of beauty but conveys solidity, permanence and antiquity.

### **Shrubbery Requires Constant Care**

Another artificial feature of a good garden which requires much thought and attention is the fence, hedge or rustic screen. The outside wall or fence that encloses the garden proper is seldom seen from the garden itself, being hidden by trees and shrubs. Whether visible or not, the outside wall is usually a solid affair about eight feet high, made of masonry, plaster, or stout bamboo.

Inside the garden there are innumerable places where a high or low hedge is required, where a tiny wicket gate is placed across the pathway, or where a screen of carefully plaited bamboo or reeds adds the final touch to the effect striven for by the landscape gardener. A great amount of ingenuity is brought into play in the use of the humble materials that go into the manufacture of these devices.

Except in the cases of trees that have attained a perfection of fantastic shape through years of patient training, the living plants of a garden are not as important in the original plan as the lifeless objects, for the plants, and even trees, can usually be replaced in a short time.

Kyoto is the best place to see the real Japanese gardens as they were in the days of daimyo and samurai. Though many of the gardens have been allowed to fall into disrepair, others have been kept as the artist planned them.

## **Japan to Abolish its Opium Monopoly**

The International Anti-Opium Association at Peking, China, has received word that the Japanese Government has definitely decided to abolish entirely the opium monopoly system at Tsingtau and in the Kwangtung leased territory in the course of this year, states the *Japan Advertiser*.



## A Fish Story

Fishermen near the mouth of the *Tone-gawa*, one of Japan's largest rivers flowing into the Pacific Ocean, are said to have made a catch of 54 whales measuring from 20 to 14 feet in length. These immense inhabitants of the sea were swept out of their path and strayed into the river. Hundreds of boats were used by the fishermen in what is one of the most surprising events that has ever happened in their neighborhood.

Though this is a fish story, nevertheless it is true, states the *Japan Advertiser* of recent date.

## Japan Society a Recipient

Through the courtesy of Mr. D. J. R. Ushikubo, of Yamanaka & Company, the Japan Society has been presented with the actual stone rubbing of the monument erected in memory of the late Professor Ernest Fenellosa. This memorial, of the natural stone of the country, stands in Uyeno Park, on the grounds of the Tokyo Art School, of which he was founder. On the face of the monument is a bust portrait of the Professor surmounting a large tablet of biographical inscription which sets forth his work in acquainting the world with the artistic development of Japan.

## Urged to Display the Rising Sun

According to a report in the *Japan Advertiser*, the Japanese national flag was first used internationally at the time Commodore Perry made his second entrance to Yedo Bay. This emblem of the rising sun dates back as far as the eighth century and Japanese newspapers are now carrying on a campaign urging the people of the Empire to exhibit the flag on all proper occasions.

## Kobe to Have a New Hospital

The erection of a 500-bed hospital in Kobe, Japan, has been made possible through a generous contribution of \$2,250,000 by the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Company to that city. This project is of particular interest since it is the first time in the history of the relations between Japan and America that architects from the two countries have co-operated in the designing of a hospital in Japan. Mr. I. Tsuma-Numa and Mr. John A. Thompson, both members of the Japan Society in New York, and Dr. Y. Kataoka, of Osaka, Japan, are the architects who will design this building, which will include the improvements of the most modern hospital in America and Europe.

## JAPAN TOURIST BUREAU

If you are contemplating going to the Orient, register with the Japan Tourist Bureau. That office exists solely to help tourists map out itineraries, choose hotels and see the most interesting places. The Japan Society, 23 West 43d Street, is the New York office and has several booklets of interest to the prospective tourist.



